



## Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
June 26, 2008

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

### ***Board of Park Commissioners:***

Present:

Neal Adams  
John Barber  
Terry Holme  
Donna Kostka  
Christine Larsen  
Jackie Ramels, Acting Chair

Excused:

Amit Ranade, Chair

### ***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:***

Tim Gallagher, Superintendent  
Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. **Commissioner Barber moved, and Commissioner Adams seconded, approval of the agenda as amended, and the June 12 minutes as corrected. The vote was taken and the motion approved.** Commissioners acknowledged the high volume of correspondence forwarded to them by the Board's Coordinator since the June 12 meeting and will approve the Acknowledgment of Correspondence at the July 10 meeting.

Preliminary Discussion: The Board heard a staff briefing and held a public hearing at its June 12 meeting on the Summer Pilot Proposal to Close Park Roads at Volunteer and Seward Park and Lake Washington Boulevard. The Superintendent clarified that the roads in Volunteer and Seward are park roads; Lake Washington Boulevard [designed by the Olmsted Brothers] is used for public transportation.

Commissioner Ramels noted that the Board has received over 250 e-mails, faxes, U.S. mail letters, and phone calls on this issue, with most comments referencing the Lake Washington Boulevard segment of the proposal. A preliminary tally of the comments showed 47% strongly support the proposal as presented, 14% support it

and asked for additional closures, 11% support the proposal except for the Thursday closure of Lake Washington Boulevard, and 28% are in opposition to the proposal. A number of people were upset because they received late notice of the proposal. Superintendent Gallagher suggested that the Board could delay its recommendation until the July 10 meeting to give people additional time to weigh in on the proposal.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Gallagher reported on several park items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Beacon Hill Reservoir Lidding Begins: Superintendent Gallagher recently viewed the reservoir from its interior when it was opened by Seattle Public Utilities and was very impressed by the experience. Seattle is in the process of lidding its reservoirs and turning the surface into new park land. For a video tour of the interior of the reservoir, see <http://westseattleblog.com/blog/?p=8534>

Ravenna Wading Pool Temporarily Closed: A few years ago, neighbors of this wading pool raised funds to complete a Neighborhood Matching Fund project consisting of concrete turtles in the bottom of the pool. After a recent inspection, King County Health Department told Parks and Recreation Department that the turtles must be moved so that they are 6 feet apart and rubberized. The turtles must be saw cut, have a softened edge added, be replaced, and then the pool can re-open. The Department expects to complete these changes and re-open the pool in late July or early August. The community is being supportive of the work. For more information on Ravenna Park wading pool, see [http://cityofseattle.net/parks/wadingpools\\_detail.asp?id=391](http://cityofseattle.net/parks/wadingpools_detail.asp?id=391).

Superintendent Visits Golden Gardens Beach Fires: Superintendent Gallagher reported that he spent the previous Friday night at Golden Gardens Beach and observed the beach fires firsthand. He stayed at the park until early Saturday morning. He observed **lots** of people enjoying themselves, with a number of teens in the natural area at the north section of the beach. He also observed at least three vehicles with improper fuels such as scrap wood and roofing materials for burning on the beach, a lot of trash and garbage, and some alcohol use.

He has now assigned Park Rangers to be there on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. The rangers will monitor the fuels and add a red warning tag on any improper fuels. Citations will then be issued if the fuels are removed from the vehicles at the park. He has instructed parks staff to install two additional fire rings at the north end of the beach, as there are many illegal fires in that area. The rangers may also be assigned at a later time to Alki Beach Park. For more information on Golden Gardens and Alki Beach Parks, see [http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park\\_detail.asp?ID=243](http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=243) and [http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park\\_detail.asp?ID=445](http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=445)

Healthy Parks Update: Many of Seattle Parks and Recreation facilities have vending machines, with the contract requiring 60% of the items to be on the healthy food list. A recent staff survey determined that only 30% actually are on the list. Staff are notifying the vending companies that their contracts will be terminated if they do not comply with the terms. For more information on the Healthy Parks Initiative, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/healthyparks/default.htm>.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Adams, Superintendent Gallagher responded that the vending machines are located at all 26 community centers and there is one in the Park Headquarters building at 100 Dexter.

Artificial Turf Update: Rebecca Salinas, Seattle Parks and Recreation's Manager of Policy and Business, has been doing a terrific analysis of artificial, or synthetic, turf, with the findings forwarded to the Park Board on June 25. She has been looking at reports that were not prepared by the synthetic turf industry. The results

thus far do not show a health risk from the synthetic turf and suggest that a 50-lb. child would need to ingest 100 lbs. of the synthetic to be at risk. Commissioners were asked to contact Ms. Salinas if they have additional questions on the information.

Waterfront Design: The Superintendent and Parks' Planning and Development Division Director Kevin Stoops will travel to Chicago in July to study the waterfront there. With Seattle's Viaduct and waterfront replacement moving closer and Parks being asked to help develop the waterfront, the Department wants to get ideas from cities where the waterfront has been developed well. For more information on the Chicago waterfront, see <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1326.html> and for photos see [http://images.google.com/images?hl=en&q=chicago+waterfront+photos&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=X&oi=image\\_result\\_group&resnum=1&ct=title](http://images.google.com/images?hl=en&q=chicago+waterfront+photos&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=X&oi=image_result_group&resnum=1&ct=title).

Statue of Liberty: [The Statue of Liberty, a small replica of the original "Liberty Enlightening the World" in New York City, and located in Alki Beach Park in West Seattle, was a gift from Reginald H. Parsons and the Seattle Council of the Boy Scouts of America in 1952. The statue has become such a symbol of liberty and courage that it became a place to mourn, to reflect, and to leave mementos after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.] The Statue has been the focus of a Neighborhood Matching Fund project, which has resulted in some controversy in the community. The Superintendent reported that the project sponsors do not agree with the Departments' plan to use concrete, instead of wooden, benches. The grand opening for the project is scheduled for September 6. For more information on Alki Beach Park and the Statue of Liberty, see [http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park\\_detail.asp?ID=445](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=445).

Commissioner Ramels reported receiving a call from someone in West Seattle who is organizing the Alki Art Fair. She is concerned that the construction on the beach will impact the art fair and reduce exhibitors as well as visitors. Commissioner Ramels will forward the contact information to the Superintendent.

Japanese Garden Entry Project: The bids were recently opened on this project and are significantly higher than the estimate and available funding. The project is being funded by the Pro Parks Levy and private donors. <http://cityofseattle.net/parks/ProParks/projects/arboretum-Japanesegarden.htm>.

South Lake Union Project: The Department has gone back to Council to ask for a \$1.8 million funding increase for the project, due to fast-rising steel costs in Phase I. For more information on this project, see <http://cityofseattle.net/parks/ProParks/projects/lakeunionpark.htm>.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Barber on whether Phase II is completed, the Superintendent stated that there is some remaining work such as planter boxes and the bridge to complete.

Comcast: The Department has a contract with Comcast to have all 26 community centers cable ready by year end. Ten of the 26 centers are still without connections. The City's Department of Information and Technology (DOIT) is working with City engineers and park planners to complete these tasks.

Park Board's Web Page: A major source of public information about the Park Board agendas and minutes is its web page. In the last month, the Board's web page was "hit" 3,000 times, including 550 visits to the agenda, 1000+ to the meeting minutes, and 179 to the Board's biographies. This is an average of nearly 36,000 annual visits. Commissioners were pleased that so many people are using the Board's web pages as a source of information. In addition to the web access, a press release for each Park Board meeting is distributed to all major news outlets, and the agenda is distributed via e-mail to another 160 individuals and groups. The Park Board's web page is located at: <http://cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/>.

Black Soldiers to be Honored: It took more than 60 years to reverse the 1944 convictions of 28 Black soldiers in a Fort Lawton disturbance connected to the death of an Italian prisoner of war. Last October, a U.S. Army ruling found the convictions had been improper. As a part of a three-day tribute to these veterans of the court marshal and their families, the Department of Parks and Recreation will host a special commemoration on the afternoon of July 26 at Fort Lawton. This is an inter-governmental tribute with Pentagon representatives, Congressman Jim McDermott, King County Executive Ron Sims, and Mayor Nickels participating. A large turnout is expected for this event. For more information on this, see <http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM3545>.

Nutrias in Seattle's Waterways: The nutria is a 12-20 inches long, and up to 20 pounds, swimming rodent. It is native to Argentina and was brought to the United States originally for the fur trade. Now, these fast-reproducing pests are doing serious damage to the stream, river, and wetland infrastructure of Seattle's waterways, including Lake Washington and the Arboretum. The Department is working with the University of Washington and Washington Fish and Wildlife and will convene a group of area agencies to devise a regional strategy to trap and control these pests. To learn more about nutrias, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coypu>.

### **Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. No one signed up to testify.

### **Discussion/Recommendation: Seattle Parks and Recreation's Draft Strategic Action Plan**

Brenda Kramer, Seattle Parks' Strategic Analyst, briefed the Board on the development of the Department's 5-year Strategic Action Plan at the June 12 meeting. Commissioners received a written briefing prior to the meeting, as well as a copy of the draft Plan. The briefing was available to the public on the Board's web page and hard copies were made available to the public at that meeting. A public hearing immediately followed the briefing.

At the June 12 meeting, one citizen, Sharon Levine, testified and stated that the public hearing and discussion of the draft Plan was not as widely advertised as it should have been under the Department's public involvement policy. (Staff had notified all those who attended the 70+ public meetings or commented online who had e-mail addresses but had not notified those with U.S. mail addresses.) Staff agreed to send out additional notices and the Board agreed to accept any additional verbal testimony at tonight's meeting. Soon after the June 12 meeting, Ms. Kramer sent notice to all who attended the public meetings, either by U.S. mail or e-mail. No additional written comments were received; three people signed up tonight to testify.

Gayle Garman: She is Chair of the Friends of Green Lake (FOGL) and supports the Department's long-term planning effort. She submitted written comments from FOGL on April 30. She stated that Green Lake Park is Seattle's most intensely used and popular park, it is exceptional in that all of its shoreline is public land, and it is not a natural lake system. Friends of Green Lake lobbied for the alum treatments to keep algae growth down in the lake. They now urge the Department to identify one staff person with Aquatic Science expertise to manage Green Lake, as it requires active planning to be properly maintained.

The Superintendent stated that a watershed manager position has been added to the draft Plan based on this request.

Nicole Franleflin: Ms. Franleflin previously worked for the Department as a Citywide Teen Unit manager in the Late Night Recreation Program, and left the Department to attend a university in another state. She believes the Strategic Action Plan does not contain a strong enough focus on teens. She urged that it include prevention programs for youth and that the Department be restructured to include a central person to develop community partnerships and seek community donations to help with the program.

Donna Hartmann-Miller: She commented that the Strategic Action Plan has been a lot to achieve in a short amount of time and she believes it is very well written. She referred to page three which states that the commitment to the community is still to be written and asked that it be finalized and included in the Plan. She commented that she loves the reference to no smoking in the parks.

Public comments concluded.

Ms. Kramer thanked the Commissioners for reading the draft Strategic Action Plan and for submitting comments and suggestions. She noted that the Plan has been evolving quickly and there is an even newer version than what the Board is reviewing tonight. She next reviewed the changes that have been made since the Board's June 12 briefing, which reflect the Commissioner's suggestions.

Commissioner Ramels asked for two additional changes that she had not previously suggested: (1) include Alki Community Center in the list of community centers that need upgrading; and (2) include the Dark Sky Initiative in the Plan. Superintendent Gallagher agreed with these suggestions.

Commissioner Ramels was struck by Ms. Franleflin's testimony regarding the need for a stronger youth focus in the Plan. She previously thought there was a lot of focus on teens and asked why the Plan doesn't point out a youth strategy. Ms. Kramer answered that the youth focus has recently been from the Pro Parks Levy which funded the Teen Life Centers and other youth programs. The Department has also asked for a youth non-violence leader in its next budget.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Kostka whether off-leash areas are considered an emerging sport, Ms. Kramer answered that it isn't at this point. The Strategic Action Plan is trying hard not to address special interests, such as the off-leash areas or new outdoor pools, and to keep its focus at a higher level.

Commissioner Barber referred to Sharon Levine's June 12 testimony and asked if the wording of the Department's public involvement policy will be strengthened as a result of the Strategic Action Plan. Ms. Kramer responded that the Department's Policy and Business staff are reviewing the policy, which needs to be revised to better reflect the city's demographics and who the Department serves. Strategic Analyst Karen Tsao is working with the Mayor's office on the revisions. Superintendent Gallagher noted that under the current public involvement policy, notice of the Strategic Action Plan would need to be mailed to everyone in Seattle.

Commissioner Larsen had submitted two suggestions to Ms. Kramer prior to the meeting: (1) Add a new item to Goal I to include the "Friends of" and other grassroots stewardship groups. The draft SAP mentions Seattle Parks Foundation, Green Seattle Partnerships, and the need to recruit new relationships. The current stakeholders such as the "Friends of" are conspicuous in their absence. Ms. Kramer noted that this was added as Goal I on Page 10. (2) Add a new item to Goal III to include working with Community Councils, Neighborhood Associations, and other geographic alliances. Ms. Kramer noted that this was added as Goal II, page 20.

Commissioner Adams referred to the Department's web site and its place in the Draft Plan. He was pleased to hear the figures on web site hits that the Superintendent gave in his report tonight and asked that the Board receive an update on these figures in a year or so.

Ms. Kramer stated that the Department is asking for the Park Board's endorsement of the Strategic Action Plan. **Commissioner Adams recommended that Superintendent Gallagher adopt the Strategic Action Plan with the additional changes that need to be made. Commissioner Larsen seconded.** Discussion: The Superintendent stated that when the Plan is in final form, it will be approved by the Mayor. The Department would also like for City Council to approve it by resolution and it will need buyoff from the Department of Finance. The Commissioners asked that, if any significant modifications are made to the Plan, it be brought back to the Board and the Superintendent agreed. Commissioner Adams asked about management and monitoring of the Plan and requested that staff present a yearly update on it to the Commissioners and to City Council. Staff agreed to do so.

Commissioner Ramels asked that a copy of the final Plan be sent to the Commissioners and Ms. Kramer will do so. She also asked how it will be distributed to the public. The Superintendent stated that 1-2,000 copies will be printed and it will be available on the Department's web page to keep the number of copies low. **The vote was taken and was unanimous.**

Commissioners thanked Ms. Kramer and staff for all the comprehensive and good work on the Plan.

## **Discussion/Recommendation: Summer Road Closures of Selected Park Roads**

At the Board's June 12 meeting, Karen Tsao, Seattle Parks and Recreation Strategic Analyst, briefed the Board on the Department's proposal for a pilot project to close some interior park roads during the summer. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing. Commissioners also received a written briefing prior to the meeting, which was available to the public on the Board's web site and hard copies were available at the meeting. The Board received testimony that a number of people who live near Lake Washington Boulevard received late notice of this proposal, due to notice being sent by bulk mail. [Later in the meeting, the Board agreed to extend its discussion and recommendation for another two weeks, until July 10, on the Lake Washington Boulevard portion of the pilot program. The Board also agreed to continue accepting written testimony through July 9 and to hear any additional verbal testimony at tonight's meeting.]

Commissioner Ramels noted that the Board has received over 250 e-mails, faxes, U.S. mail letters, and phone calls on this issue, with most comments referencing the Lake Washington Boulevard segment of the proposal. A preliminary tally of the comments showed 47% strongly support the proposal as presented, 14% support it and asked for additional closures, 11% support the proposal except for the Thursday closure of Lake Washington Boulevard, and 28% are in opposition to the proposal.

### ***Additional Public Comments***

Richard Weaver: He is vice-president of the Lake Sawyer Club which has a Parks Department-issued permit to fly motorized aircraft at Seward Park every Thursday. Many people watch the planes flying and a busload of elderly people come by every Thursday to watch. The Club came before the Park Board several years ago and asked for its assistance with the permit. During the Board's subsequent public hearing, many people supported the Club and he is here tonight to support those who object to the Thursday closure. He did not receive notice of the June 12 public hearing. It is unreasonable to close Lake Washington Boulevard for 17 additional days each year to motorized traffic. This will impact the use of the Ferdinand Street Boat Dock. There are many alternative trails to use instead of closing the Boulevard.

Victor Ikeda: He lives ½ block from Stan Sayres Pits. When the Bicycle Sundays along Lake Washington Boulevard first began, he supported the idea – now he just tolerates the events. He believes non-motorized usage of the Boulevard does not justify closing it every Thursday and extending the length of closure time. This proposal is not about pedestrians, as there already is a pedestrian walkway in the Boulevard. He has been walking at this park for 20 years and believes there are more bikes on regular days than on Bicycle Sundays and they use the road with vehicles. Currently, the kids, seniors, and novel cyclists use the pedestrian path. The Boulevard is already closed for SeaFair, the Danskin run, boating, and other events and he urged that it not be closed on Thursdays and that the length of closure on other bicycle days not be extended as most bikes are off the Boulevard by 5:00 pm.

Doug Johnson: He lives on Lake Washington Boulevard across from Seward Park, has three children and two dogs, and Bicycle Sundays has been a terrific part of their lives. However, he does not support the proposal to close the Boulevard on Thursdays or to extend the time of Bicycle Sundays. He has observed many bike “racers” already there on Thursdays and believes they are the ones in support of this proposal. He asked that the Department implement a two-step process of adding the additional weekend day and hold off on the Thursday and extended hours closures. He requested that speed bumps be added for safety. He added that he only received notice of the meeting on June 25.

Public testimony concluded.

Commissioner Holmes referred to Mr. Weaver’s testimony and asked if the Lake Sawyer Club could use Seward Park on another day. Mr. Weaver answered that Seattle Park and Recreation’s Concessions Manager, Charles Ng, had called him the day before to ask this. Mr. Weaver stated that changing the day is not impossible, but it is inconvenient for the Club. They fly at Hobart Field [near Maple Valley] on other days. It is closed for flying on Thursdays, so they use Seward Park.

### ***Board Discussion and Recommendation***

Ms. Tsao introduced herself as the project manager planning this program. It is proposed as a pilot this year and a citywide program next year. Since the June 12 Park Board meeting, notice of the proposal was mailed to an additional 3,500 households along Lake Washington Boulevard. She reviewed the tally of correspondence as stated by Commissioner Ramels at the beginning of tonight’s meeting: over 250 e-mails, faxes, U.S. mail letters, and phone call, with 47% strongly supporting the proposal as presented, 14% support it and asked for additional closures, 11% support the proposal except for the Thursday closure of Lake Washington Boulevard, and 28% are in opposition to the proposal. The Board received many suggestions on improving the closures. [Note: project managers also receive copies of all correspondence sent to the Park Board.]

Information was mailed to households around Volunteer Park to notify people of a June 24 meeting on the proposed closure of Volunteer Park. No one attended the meeting and no comments have been received about this closure. Ms. Tsao is working closely with the Seattle Asian Art Museum [located in Volunteer Park and closed on Mondays, the day of the road closure] to accommodate its needs.

Ms. Tsao next addressed some concerns voiced in the correspondence.

Seward Park Art Studio: The Board received several comments from people who use the Art Studio concerned that the closure will affect their parking. Ms. Tsao stated that the closure will not affect the Studio’s parking lot.

Lake Sawyer Club: Ms. Tsao and Charles Ng are working on details with Mr. Weaver and believe that the Thursday morning flights can continue during the closure.

Thursday Impacts to Commuters on Lake Washington Boulevard: The proposal is to close the Boulevard to motorized traffic at 9:00 am, after the morning commute. She is working closely with SDOT on this.

The proposed start dates for the pilot are:

- ❖ Volunteer Park on Friday, July 4
- ❖ Seward Park on Wednesday, July 10
- ❖ Lake Washington Boulevard: the first additional day of closure would be the last weekend in July

Her goal is to do a good job this summer to manage the pilot and an even better job next summer. These improvements are being developed to encourage healthy living and for families.

Ms. Tsao asked the Board to consider each of the three locations separately in its discussion so that at least part of the proposal may move ahead. The Superintendent added that the Department may come back to the Board later this year to ask that Arboretum Drive be added to the pilot. It is currently closed to vehicles for construction and is being heavily used by bicyclists and pedestrians.

### ***Board Discussion and Recommendation***

Comments from Commissioners included:

#### *Commissioner Larsen*

- ❖ She appreciated that most comments were respectful. She finds those kind of tones easier to read and noted that it does not advance an argument when people call the proposal “dumb” or use other such descriptions.
- ❖ She referred to the Thursday closure of Lake Washington Boulevard and asked if the proposal can include holding off on this segment while staff continue working on it. The Superintendent stated that it is possible that the Boulevard would not be closed on Thursdays. Staff will take additional time to work with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) on weekday traffic patterns.
- ❖ She asked why Volunteer Park’s western loop at the reservoir was selected for the closure rather than the entrance end, which is used by more families. Ms. Tsao responded that the closure area is still being discussed. The west side of the park is used for prostitution and drug usage [with cars driving into that area of the park for the illegal behaviors.] Closing it to vehicle traffic and encouraging walking and biking and other legitimate use of this area will help re-claim that portion of the park.
- ❖ The Thursday commuter issue on Lake Washington Boulevard is a big issue and is important to look at more closely. Ms. Tsao responded that she will continue working closely with SDOT.
- ❖ She suggested sharrows be added on Lake Washington Boulevard like the ones on 19<sup>th</sup> Ave East at Miller Community Center to give bicyclists some space for riding. Ms. Tsao will check with SDOT to see if the sharrows are possible.
- ❖ She noted that kids are out of school during the summer and this pilot gives them more opportunities to get outside and be active.

#### *Commissioner Barber*

- ❖ He has concerns that Thursday is garbage collection day on Lake Washington Boulevard.
- ❖ He asked that Ms. Tsao discuss the impacts of traffic on the two nearby arterials if Lake Washington Boulevard is closed on Thursdays. Ms. Tsao responded that SDOT will not allow Lake Washington Boulevard to be closed during the morning commute and thus the pilot closure begins at 9:00 am, which is non-rush hour.



### *Commissioner Ramels*

- ❖ She asked if the Board defers its discussion and recommendation on Lake Washington Boulevard to the July 10 meeting, if Ms. Tsao could give the Board additional information from SDOT on how nearby arterials would be affected by a Thursday closure. Is there time to get traffic flow patterns from SDOT by the July 10 meeting? Other Commissioners agreed that this information would be extremely helpful in their deliberations.
- ❖ She is concerned that Thursday is garbage collection day.
- ❖ She asked if the Board defers its discussion and recommendation on Lake Washington Boulevard to the July 10 meeting, if Ms. Tsao could give the Board additional information from SDOT on how nearby arterials would be affected by a Thursday closure. Is there time to get traffic flow patterns from SDOT by the July 10 meeting? Other Commissioners agreed that this information would be extremely helpful in their deliberations.
- ❖ In addition, she suggested updates of the following items at the next meeting:
  - Recycling collection along Lake Washington Boulevard
  - Arrangements with Lake Sawyer Club about their Thursday fly days.

### *Commissioner Adams*

- ❖ He has read all the testimony and had several questions:
  - How many people currently use the Bicycle Sundays?
  - What is Parks expected goal from the additional closures?
  - How will the Department encourage more people to get out and use the roads during the closures?
- ❖ Ms. Tsao answered that, if the pilot is approved, the Department will promote these additional opportunities and expects usage to increase over time and to also be spread by word of mouth.

### *Commissioner Holmes*

- ❖ He lives near Seward Park and also received late notice of the pilot proposal.
- ❖ He often walks along Lake Washington Boulevard and it is much nicer to walk there without cars – this proposal is not just about bikes.
- ❖ He asked that Ms. Tsao bring the Board an analysis of the added value of extending the closures from the current 6:00 pm end to a 9:00 pm end time.
- ❖ There are serious concerns about increased traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard and introducing a one-day per week closure may help deter commuters from using the Boulevard. He is in favor of traffic-calming measures for the Boulevard.
- ❖ He asked for statistics on bike accidents along the Boulevard. During his walks, he has observed a number of vehicle accidents. Safety is an issue.
- ❖ Lake Washington Boulevard is a park and not just a road.

### *Commissioner Kostka*

- ❖ A number of comments concerned the fast speed of some bicyclists and a lack of courtesy to others on the Boulevard. She asked how those people will be educated and encouraged to bike courteously. Ms. Tsao answered that signage is planned to help with this.
- ❖ She asked about references to some people abusing the parking at the park-owned lots along Lake Washington Boulevard and if there is any police enforcement. Ms. Tsao answered that people are on an honor system to use the parking lots properly. Seattle Police Department do not enforce parking in the lots and must be called for any problems.
- ❖ She asked if Lake Washington Boulevard special users would be issued a special permit or pass for access during the closures and Ms. Tsao answered yes. Access would be allowed for homeowners, emergency and service vehicles, and ADA and other permit holders.

Commissioner Ramels asked if Commissioners were prepared to make a decision on the Volunteer Park and Seward Park segments of the proposal. **Commissioner Barber moved that the pilot begin at Lake Washington Boulevard on July 5 and 6 [to give pedestrians and bicyclists additional access to the Boulevard during the long holiday weekend] and defer consideration of the rest of the Lake Washington Boulevard until the Board's July 10 meeting. Commissioner Larsen seconded.** Ms. Tsao pointed out that the day before is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and it will not be feasible to begin the pilot that weekend. **Commissioner Barber recalled the motion.**

**Commissioner Holme moved that the Board recommend that staff move ahead with the Volunteer Park and Upper Loop Seward Park portion of the pilot. Commissioner Adams seconded. The vote was taken and the motion was approved.**

**Commissioner Barber moved that the Board defer the Lake Washington Blvd segment of the pilot until the Board's July 10 meeting. Commissioner Kostka seconded. The vote was taken and the motion passed.** Ms. Tsao will bring additional information from SDOT on traffic patterns and closure impacts to the Board for their July 10 discussion. Commissioners stated that the Board will continue accepting testimony on the pilot until the meeting. The Board's Coordinator will post information on the Board's web page to that effect and will notify people who wrote the Board. Ms. Tsao will re-email groups she has already notified.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Tsao for her work on this pilot and she thanked the Commissioners for their helpful feedback and for recommending that the Volunteer Park and Seward Park Loop portions of the proposal move forward.

## **Briefing: Youth Gang Violence Strategy**

Seattle Parks and Recreation's Community Connections Manager, Mickey Fearn, briefed the Board on the Department's youth gang violence strategy. Commissioners received a written briefing prior to tonight's meeting, which was available to the public on the Board's web site, and hard copies were made available one hour prior to tonight's meeting.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

This is a briefing for informational purposes only.

#### **Project Description and Background**

In January 2008, nine African-American young people died in Seattle as a result of gun violence. There were eight murders and one suicide. The suicide, a friend of one of the murder victims, has been attributed to his inability to handle the violent death of his friend. The Mayor challenged City departments and our community to identify creative strategies specifically intended to reduce youth violence and youth involvement in gangs.

The aim of the youth violence reduction effort is to ensure that all Seattle youth are intelligent, safe, healthy and unafraid. An initial step toward this aim has been the formation of an inter-departmental committee to design the City's response to these challenges. The Department of Parks and Recreation has acted in a major leadership role for this committee.

Specifically the Department of Parks and Recreation is expanding some of our current youth development programs and is submitting a budget request for the 2009-2010 budget to fund a Youth Violence Reduction Unit within Parks and Recreation that will:

- Create and implement strategic approaches and programs that are intentionally designed to reduce the number of youth at risk for abuse, violence and neglect;
- Collaborate internally, with other City departments, community organizations, and individuals to design racially and culturally appropriate prevention, early intervention, intervention and emergency intervention services;
- Build the capacity of our recreation staff to create innovative programs and services that will address the comprehensive and complex challenges that confront this generation of youth; and
- Work with community centers, after school programs, Late Night staff and Environmental Learning Centers to improve their approaches to youth development.

### **Public Involvement Process**

The Staff at the Southwest Community Center conducted a meeting with young people to determine their perspective and concerns regarding youth development and youth violence. In addition, Parks and Recreation staff participated in meetings with community organizations engaged in youth development and reducing youth violence. Department staff participated in nearly one hundred hours of these meetings.

At the meetings, which have ranged from as few as five to as many as 100 attendees, residents of the communities that have been most heavily affected by the violence have consistently expressed a sense of urgency regarding this challenge. They are concerned about the safety and health of their families and want to focus government and community resources and energy on eliminating this problem.

### **Issues**

In the recent meetings young people and adults have expressed the vital need for programs and services that create opportunities for:

- Self esteem
- Hope
- Preserving family relationships/connection/kinship/mentoring
- Understanding and participating in their communities
- Independence
- Mastery
- Power
- Expansion of options, world view, and career choices
- Provide opportunities for young people to identify, refine, and share their talents
- Rites of passage
- Career skills and opportunities

All of these activities are the essence of the Department's vision, mission and values.

### **Budget**

The 2009-2010 budget request for the Youth Violence Reduction Unit is \$600,000 for staffing and program costs.

### **Schedule**

The Department is presently implementing short-term strategies. The long-term strategy, in addition to the creation of the Youth Violence Reduction Unit, is to audit and transform existing programs and services so that they are intentionally designed to address the challenges of youth and gang violence.

### **Additional Information**

Mickey Fearn, 684-8035; [mickey.fearn@seattle.gov](mailto:mickey.fearn@seattle.gov)

### ***Board Discussion***

Mr. Fearn noted that he began work with Seattle Parks in January of this year and has since been networking and meeting with community groups to help develop a strategy.

Commissioner Ramels stated that she is a member of the Neighborhood Matching Fund's Citywide Review Team. Two applications relevant to this discussion have been very successful. One project was a youth production of records and the second was development of rap songs. She asked Mr. Fearn if he is familiar with these projects and he answered yes and that they are being considered for the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Kostka about the budget for this program, Mr. Fearn answered that the Department is requesting \$600,000 but has no budget at this time. Commissioner Kostka believes these are wonderful goals. Mr. Fearn stated the Department's Parks Division will be responsible to lead the Department in implementing the strategy and will receive training to better understand poverty, violence, racism, and the life experience that some of the youth have, as well as ways to help break the cycles of poverty and violence. The most recent focus on youth violence has been on a random basis and must be made a primary focus. It is a serious mistake to have a large group of people with little to do.

Commissioner Barber lives near one of the community centers and recently asked staff there about the late night basketball program. They told him that it is a difficult program to supervise and he asked for Mr. Fearn's thoughts about this. Mr. Fearn responded that Seattle's late night recreation program was developed at the community centers about 15 years and became a national model. Later on the program experienced budget cuts after the gang problems lessened. Now the problem has arisen again and the City must be intentional to give it high importance. Staff must be trained on how best to deal with today's youth.

Commissioner Barber next asked about keeping lights on later in outdoor parks so youth can play basketball. Mr. Fearn responded that many of the parks don't even have any lights to turn on to be used for this purpose. Commissioner Holme asked about the security in parking lots where the late night programs are held. Mr. Fearn answered that staff are needed who can understand the youth and issues they are dealing with.

Commissioner Adams asked for a description of the short term goals of the strategy. Mr. Fearn answered that the two short-term goals are to expand the late night recreation program and the job programs. He added that Mayor Nickels has asked for the City Departments to work together to develop a budget issue paper. Commissioner Adams asked what is working well and what isn't and whether some cities are handling the youth gang and violence response better than others. Mr. Fearn answered that he began working with gangs in Los Angeles soon after he graduated from college and since 1968 the most successful model is the roving leader strategy. As he stated earlier, the Department's late night program budget was cut, crime has increased, and youth have changed over the past 15 years. People who have experience dealing with today's gangs and youth violence are needed.

Commissioner Ramels reflected that it will be a huge job to implement a strategy to deal with youth and gang violence and includes budget ramifications for the City and Mr. Fearn agreed.

Mr. Fearn noted that while the Strategic Action Plan was being developed, people who are not immediately affected by the violence focused on trails and other topics. Meanwhile, he was attending meetings in areas where kids die as a result of violence. People in those communities are looking to the Department to give the youth a safe place and the Department's challenge is to understand the community's sense of urgency to help them. There is no boundary on the impact of the violence. Commissioner Ramels commented that Mr.

Fearn's comments are very well put and timely, as five young people were shot over the weekend and another shooting was reported earlier in the day.

Mr. Fearn offered to update the Board as this program is developed and Commissioners agreed that he do so. Commissioner Adams stated that it is very critical to understand and respond to these issues. Commissioner Larsen added that she supports this effort and hopes it gets funded. She urged that the Department not cut it, if it doesn't receive designated funding in the next budget.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Fearn for the briefing.

**Old/New Business**

New Parks Levy: Commissioner Adams is a member of the City Council's Committee on the Park Levy Feasibility Committee. He reported that the Committee's report will be presented to Council at 9:30 am on Friday, June 27. The Committee will recommend that Council consider the \$140,000,000 parks levy for the November 2008 ballot. Superintendent Gallagher noted that this Levy is smaller than the current Pro Parks Levy. The \$140,000,000 amount, plus the amount requested by Mayor Nickels for a Pike Market Levy, are equal to the current Pro Parks Levy amount.

The other Commissioners thanked Commissioner Adams for all his hard work on the Levy Committee.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jackie Ramels, Vice-Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_